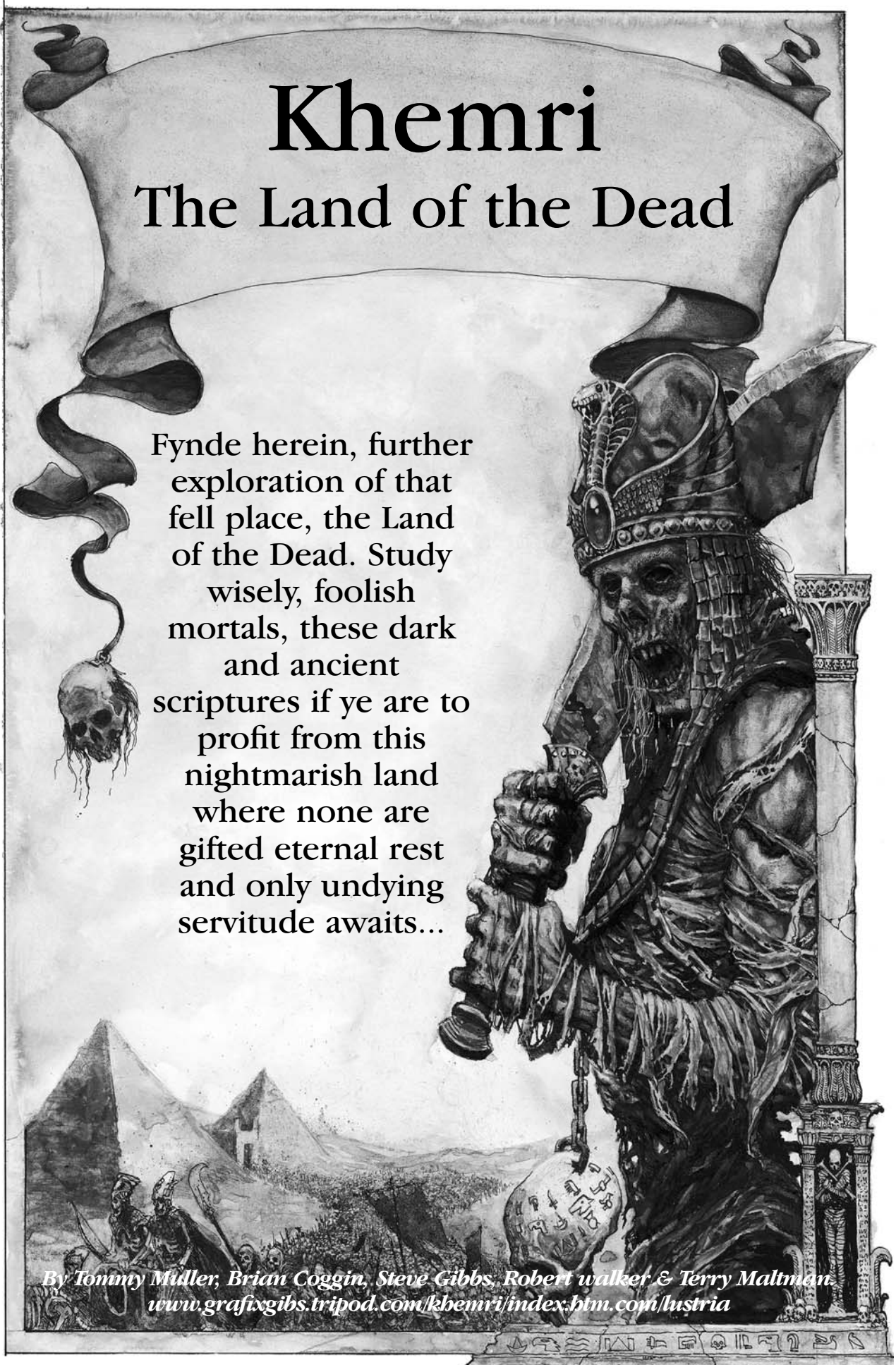


Khemri

The Land of the Dead

Fynde herein, further
exploration of that
fell place, the Land
of the Dead. Study
wisely, foolish
mortals, these dark
and ancient
scriptures if ye are to
profit from this
nightmarish land
where none are
gifted eternal rest
and only undying
servitude awaits...

By Tommy Muller, Brian Coggin, Steve Gibbs, Robert walker & Terry Maltman
www.grafixgibs.tripod.com/khemri/index.htm www.lustria.com



Khemri – The Land of the Dead

This is the second installment of Khemri – The Land of the Dead; the new setting based to the far south of the Old World amidst the burning desert sands and lost temples of old Nehekhar. This section introduces new equipment and rules for fighting within the great tombs of this realm of Undead.

Going Underground

Those of you who have played Warhammer Quest will remember the fun of exploring dungeons and encountering all manner of evil creatures in the depths. You can also set Mordheim games in dungeons using the following rules. These rules are applicable to any setting including Mordheim, Khemri and the up and coming Karak Azgal – Halls of the Dwarflords the prototype rules for this were 'Mordheimquest' were first featured in issue 12 in the Rivers of Blood scenario.



FIGHTING IN TUNNELS

For the most part skirmishing in the confined tunnels of a Khemrian tomb, the crypts and sewers below Mordheim or a Dwarf stronghold follow the normal rules for fighting in city streets. There are however a few additional restrictions on movement.

Large Creatures: Large creatures (Ogres, Trolls, mounted models, etc.) can move and run normally in rooms and halls but cannot run in tunnels as they have to stoop. If they charge in a tunnel they are limited to normal movement.

Flying: Flyers may fly only in rooms and caverns where there is sufficient height. In tunnels they must walk.

Blocking tunnels: Space to move around in tunnels is limited. For a model to pass by another there must be a gap equal to the width of the passing model's base. This is especially important to prevent models charging around the back of an enemy who is blocking a passage. In three-dimensional terrain it is easy enough to notice this but care should be taken when playing on two-dimensional tiles.

Narrow passages: On occasion tunnels will be as narrow as 1". These are often secret passages linking other locations. As they are so narrow only models with 20mm or 25mm wide bases will be able to creep along them. Running is not possible. Large creatures will not be able to enter a narrow passage at all.

UNDERGROUND TERRAIN

There are several ways of simulating tunnels and catacombs. The simplest is the tile system used in Warhammer Quest. If you have access to that game you can lay out a dungeon by taking turns to place a tile which links onto a previous one. If you prefer to explore an unknown dungeon then use the rules below for randomising tiles. If you don't have the Quest tiles they can be reproduced simply by cutting rectangles from cereal packets and painting or drawing details on the reverse side.



For a regular dungeon player (and it can become addictive!) it is worth constructing a set of 'Foot tiles'. Each player builds eight tiles 1 ft square each (hence the name) which can be laid out to fill a 4' x 4' table in a variety of ways. The tiles are made to standard dimensions and are hence compatible no matter who builds them. The simplest can be painted onto a flat piece of card or board. I have made a simple set by sticking photocopies of Quest dungeon tiles onto cork floor tiles. Those of you who visited Games Day UK may have seen our demo table with fully modelled 3D scenic modules.

EXPLORE AS YOU GO

The following rules are for placing your dungeon tiles for underground scenarios. Each player starts with a small room at one corner of the table. From there they will build the Tomb as they go, unless the scenario states other wise. Also a large room is placed in the centre as the objective, unless stated otherwise in the scenario. Start each turn by rolling to see what type of tile to place on the board and then roll a D6 to find out where to place it. When adding a new tile it must:

1. Connect to the tile you most recently placed.
2. Be placed in contact with a side of the previous tile that is not connected to another tile.
3. Not go off the table.

Roll a D6 to determine which edge of the last tile the new tile is placed against (eg, the last tile you placed was a hall. Select each side to be a different value 1-2 left side, 3-4 end, 5-6 right side. After rolling for the edge place the new tile flat against that edge). You may connect to other halls, rooms, etc, as you go along, even those placed by your opponent.

Roll 2D6 to find out what type of tile you may place on the board.

2D6	Tile
2	Large Room
3-6	Hall (corridor)
7-8	T-junction
9-11	Small room
12	Room of your choice

FOOT TILES

Foot tiles are modular terrain sections for use in tunnel settings. They are meant to be portable as well as functional. Each Foot tile is a 12" square piece of terrain for use in underground scenarios. The rules for creating them are standard for creating modular terrain. There are several advantages to using standardised tile rules. The foremost of which is that each player can build terrain that is 'favourable' to his style of play. A player with a 'shooty' warband is going to want some areas with long corridors that he can take advantage of. A player with a close combat orientated warband is going to want lots of short hallways and areas roomy enough to set up a good skirmish line in. Both players can get what they want, provided they build it. Which points the way to another advantage of

the Foot tile standard every time a player plays against a previously untried opponent, the challenge of the table's layout is renewed. If both players have warbands that prefer to kill at a distance, the Foot tile standard will generate a table with lots of long hallways to shoot down (making both players happy). If both players are using warbands that prefer to get 'stuck in', the table will be a labyrinth of twisting hallways. If the players split in their warbands fighting style, the table will have elements of both. The last point in favour of using this standard is one of simple mechanics. If everyone is working to the same standard, then the Set Up rules for any scenario can take this into account as they are being written, allowing for a more adaptable set of scenarios. By allowing part of the tabletop to use more traditional terrain a large underground gallery can be created. This could mean for a scenario that takes place in a great hall, burial chamber, or treasure room and the corridors around it. In essence, the standard allows a 'shorthand' method of describing very complex areas of the underground setting.

Building the modular terrain for the Foot Tile Standard follows these principles:

1. While it would be nice for each tile to be exactly 12" by 12", some allowance has to be made for the fact that the tiles are not likely to be perfectly square or the same size. If the tile is fractionally under-sized then it will still work fine. So the tile should be as close to 12" x 12" without exceeding that measurement. If there is to be error, then it must be fractionally less than 12".

2. All tiles are to be built with the exit/entrance points centred on the tile's edges and all exit/entrances should be 2" wide. Again there will be some error in measurement but doorways not fitting together exactly between tiles will not cause the table to 'warp' (so they are much less critical).

3. The minimum width for a hallway is 2". This allows two 20mm or 25mm base models or one monster base model to effectively block a hallway but still leaves enough room for you to move them without getting stuck.

4. The measurement between the most distant exits must be no greater than 20". This is to prevent players from creating filigree labyrinth pieces that would take a dozen turns to cross and screw up time based scenarios.



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5. No section of the tile can cause a dead end. Please note that if a pair of tunnels cross 'over and under' each other, but never join it is still acceptable.

6. Each player is required to have eight tiles. Of the eight tiles, five of them must have four exits. The remaining three must have three exits.

7. The tiles may have terrain that builds upward, but the tile's height should never exceed 6" and the area of the floor space may not exceed 216 square inches. This allows for a tile to be built that has a second storey, but the area it covers can not exceed that of the first floor's area.



As long as the terrain created adheres to these rules, the players may build on the tile as they choose. While I would like to see players create their own layouts in three dimensions by placing walls on the tile, drawing and colouring them would do fine. People who feel that their modelling/painting talents are limited could colour copy or scan the tiles from WH Quest and paste them to the tile.

By agreement with your gaming group you may also create larger chambers of maybe 2'x1' or even 2'x2'. These larger rooms should still conform to multiples of the standard dimensions for doorways. As large underground chambers they should have pillars to support the ceiling (obviously you don't actually have to model a ceiling!) and lots of other cover. Think of the amount of cover you would expect in Mordheim.

You may also want to create special 'objective rooms'. These are rooms containing a feature which is used as a scenario objective. These may be tombs, treasure chambers, a monster's lair or maybe a prison. These rooms are a good excuse to use your imagination and go to town with the detailing.

UNDERGROUND SCENARIOS

In general, any Mordheim scenario which can be played in the streets of a ruined city can also be played in the tunnels and chambers of an underground dungeon. There are just a few things that need to be changed:

Entrances: When a scenario refers to deployment on a table edge, it clearly isn't possible as there are no distinct edges in a dungeon. Whichever way you construct your dungeon there must be at least one entrance per warband. Treat each entrance as a

potential deployment zone. The warband should all be placed within 8" of the entrance doorway. Either the player can choose an entrance in the same way as he would a table edge or you can randomise the entrances. Place one of the numbered counters that come with the Mordheim box set adjacent to each entrance and roll a D6. If you roll a non-existent entrance or if the entrance is already occupied by a warband, then re-roll.

Exits: One of the nasty things about dungeons is that as soon as you enter, the door slams shut behind you. If there is a need to get off the table with treasure or for a breakthrough etc, then it should be done via a different entrance unless the scenario says otherwise. This stops wary warbands skulking around their entrance waiting for other warbands to fight all of the random monsters or set off the traps.

Rooms: Where the scenario calls for the occupation or searching of a building then treat a room as a building. A room is any space 3" or wider in both directions. When placing treasure markers you can either randomise the rooms or randomise the entrances to deploy in. Either way it prevents one side taking advantage of the set-up.

The following are examples of how certain scenarios are affected. Unless otherwise stated, the scenarios follow the instructions given in the Mordheim rulebook.

2. Skirmish

The warbands are each deployed at a random entrance and fight until one warband routs.

4. Breakthrough

The attacker deploys within 8" of a chosen entrance. The defender may then deploy anywhere in the dungeon at least 14" away from any attackers. The attacker wins if two of his warriors leave the dungeon via an exit other than the one they entered by.



7. Hidden Treasure

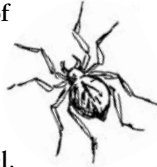
The warbands are deployed within 8" of a random entrance. Warriors (not animals) must search for treasure by exploring rooms. As soon as a warrior enters a room roll 2D6. On a roll of 12 the treasure is found. Warbands may not search the room in which they start. If the treasure is not found when there is only one room left, then it must be in the last

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room. The warband must carry the treasure chest out of the dungeon via an exit other than the one they entered the dungeon by.

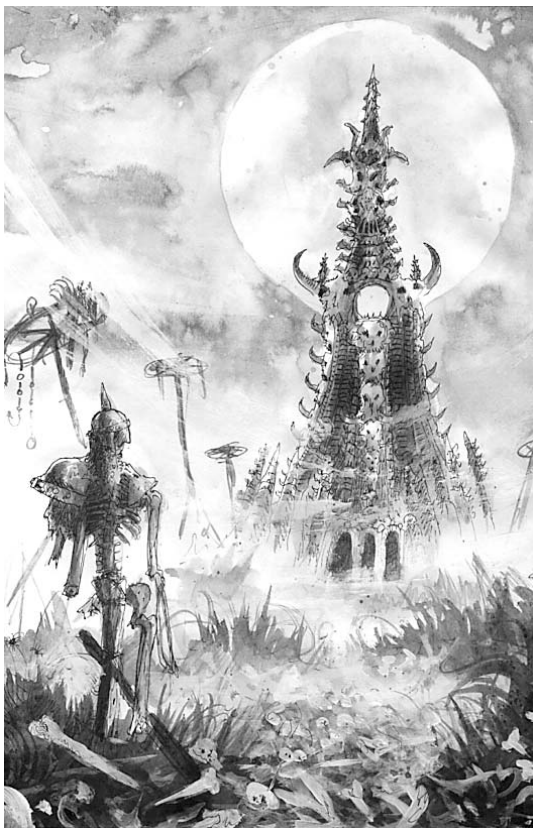
9. Surprise Attack

The defending player determines which warriors are available at the start of the game according to the instructions in the rulebook. The models are deployed anywhere within the dungeon but must be no closer than 8" to another model.



No model may be deployed closer than 8" to an entrance. The attacker is deployed within 8" of a random entrance. Any defending troops that appear after the first turn arrive through hidden passages. Number the rooms within the dungeon (you can use Mordheim numbered tokens to show this) and randomise which passage each Hero or Henchman group, arrives through.

Using these principles, almost any Mordheim scenario can be set underground. You may also wish to make up your own based on them. Oh, and if you want to try a multi-player scenario then try Monster Hunt from Best of Town Cryer. The Troll Slayers love that one!



Traps – Curse of the Ancients

The pyramids and tombs of Khemri were regarded as sacred places where the spirits of the dead resided in the afterlife. Tombs were often filled with riches and treasures to bring comfort to the dead in their final place of rest, just as the dead themselves were elaborately tended to in preparation for eternal life. To prevent pillaging and the defiling of the deceased, many tombs were equipped with a series of deadly traps. Often these were simple devices intended to ward off would-be intruders, but in some cases intricate traps capable of terrible destructive power were found in the tombs of the wealthy and powerful. Warbands exploring the tombs must contend with these ancient devices, which are still poised to kill an unwary intruder. Often warbands will have to find alternate routes to the tombs or risk suffering great losses to these constructs of antiquity. However, some experienced tomb raiders are well versed in the manner and style with which the ancient people guarded their dead, and possess the ability to avoid and even disarm the traps that await them beneath the surface of the desert.

The ancient peoples of Khemri had many different designs for the traps that they would set in the tombs. Over time, some of these have become ineffective as their parts slowly decompose or seize up. Some of the traps were quickly built, while others were built into the structure of the tombs, and are incredibly dangerous.

WHERE, WHEN AND HOW...

These rules are written for the Khemri setting but can easily be adapted to others, such as Mordheim or Lustria. We hope to bring you alternate trap lists in the future.

Unless it states otherwise in the scenario, as you lay the tiles to make the dungeon, each time you place a room or a Foot tile roll a D6. If the result is a 1 for a Warhammer Quest style tile or a 1-2 for a Foot tile, then there is a trap in the room. Place a trap counter approximately in the centre.

The difference in D6 score needed is because it takes a lot more Quest tiles than Foot Tiles to cover a table top. On average, either method should give you between four and six traps in a 4" Square dungeon. Trap counters can be made from small pieces of card about 1" square or you can use the counters that come with the Mordheim game. Spare slottabases are also suitable.

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When a warrior moves within 1" of a Trap counter he must test against his Initiative. A successful test means that the warrior is able to avoid the trap through either skill or luck. An unsuccessful test means that the warrior has triggered the trap's detection mechanism (anything from a trip-wire to a pressure-sensitive block). Roll a D6 and consult the table below to reveal the nature of the trap. A simple trap causes an automatic hit but a complex trap means that the warrior has stumbled onto something really nasty! Once the type of trap is known then it cannot be changed if it is subsequently reset.



D6 Trap

- 1-2 Simple Trap:** These are traps that were quickly jury-rigged and easy to make. They will only ever affect the warrior that trips them, and cause a S3 hit. The warrior must make a roll to wound, with armour saves allowed as normal.
- 3-5 Dud:** These are traps that have become useless over time. They will not work in any effective manner, and are therefore quite harmless.
- 6 Complex:** These are ingeniously designed traps that are remarkably destructive. Since the builders of the tomb wanted no-one desecrating the holy ground within, the traps have the potential to hurt more than one model at a time. Some will activate each time they are triggered, and others will work only once, but to devastating effect. Roll 2D6 and consult the Complex trap chart below.

2D6 Complex Trap

- 2 Boulder:** A giant boulder has fallen from the ceiling, and threatens the model beneath. The warrior must take another Initiative test. A successful test means that the warrior has avoided the boulder. An unsuccessful test means that the warrior was too slow, and takes D3 S5 hits (no armour saves). The boulder will roll D6" in a random direction (use a Scatter dice). Any other warriors in its way will also have to test Initiative, failure will result in one S5 hit. This trap will only work once.
- 3-4 Pit:** As a warrior walks along, the floor suddenly opens up and he drops D6 inches into a pit. Any other warriors 1" or closer to the pit must also test Initiative, failure meaning they fall into the pit too. Use the Mordheim rules for falling. Warriors who find themselves still alive in the pit will also have to climb out. This trap will work only once, but there will be a pit (depth determined by the original roll) in the tunnel.
- 5 Arrows:** The warrior triggers a hail of D6 arrows (S3). Roll a D6 for each arrow: 1-3 Hit, 4-6 Miss.
- Any arrows that miss the warrior may hit nearby warriors, (within 2"). If there is a warrior within this range, then it must roll on the Hit/Miss chart above for every arrow that misses the original target. If there are multiple targets, then divide the misses among them (starting with the closest and continuing outwards). Any further misses will have hit the opposite wall. This trap will work multiple times, so any warriors that walk over the Trap counter again must also test their Initiative.
- 6 Curse:** The Liche Priest who supervised the building of the tomb has placed a powerful curse on all who desecrate it. All warriors within 1" of the trap when it is triggered must re-roll any successful to hit rolls or armour saves. Affected warriors must take a Leadership test in each of their subsequent Recovery phases. If they pass they have shaken off the effects of the curse.
- 7 Swinging Blades:** As the warrior passes by, large razor-sharp blades swing out

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from the wall. The warrior must make another Initiative test, or receive 2 x S5 hits (armour saves as usual). Should the warrior have stopped on the trap counter during his Movement he will have to test his Initiative at the beginning of his next turn or suffer a further 2 x S5 hits. This trap will strike any warrior that passes over it with a failed Initiative test.

- 8 **Poison Gas:** The warrior is engulfed in a blast of poison gas. The gas will cause D3 S4 hits as the warrior gasps for air. Any other warriors within 2" will also be affected (one S4 hit). Warriors immune to poison take no damage.

- 9 **Sandbox:** Slabs of stone fall from the roof, behind and in front of the warband, trapping any warriors within 2" of the warrior who triggered the trap, totally blocking the passage. The space between the slabs begins to fill with sand!

The only way to escape is to find a loose stone beneath which there is a switch that resets the trap, clearing the area. Trapped warriors must make a successful Initiative test to find the switch. This has a cumulative penalty of -1 each turn after the first, as the sand slowly traps the warrior in its grasp.

If the warrior's effective Initiative reaches 0, the warrior is trapped and can do nothing; he is considered Out of Action. After the battle, a Hero from the warband may try to find the lost warriors instead of trading for rare goods. Each Hero takes an Initiative test in the same way as looking for Dramatis Personae. If they are found they are all released and must roll for injuries as normal. If there are warriors trapped in more than one Sandbox then search for each group separately. Only Heroes who did not go Out of Action may search for trapped warriors.

- 10 **Fire Trap:** A pillar of fire blasts out from the wall, engulfing the warrior and any others nearby. The warrior immediately receives a S5 hit, and on a roll of 4+ will count as being on fire. Warriors within 2" must roll a D6, on a score of 4+ they are also on fire. (See the fire rules from TC no. 7).



- 11 **Deadfall.** A large block of stone slowly descends from the ceiling, totally blocking the passage. The warrior who triggered the trap and any other warrior within 2" may go forward to a new tile or return to any adjacent tile already placed. The warriors can easily step from under the slowly moving block and it will cause no damage.

This has the potential to be a real pain for a warrior – trapped deep in the tomb or having to find another (long) way around.

- 12 **Collapsing walls:** The walls close in on the warrior, threatening to crush him! The warrior must make an Initiative test. If successful, the warrior is quick enough to dodge the trap, (and if the warrior had stopped on the Trap counter, move it 1" to either side). If the warrior fails his Initiative test, the walls crush him between them. The warrior will receive a S8 hit. Once the walls collapse, they immediately open up again, ready for the next unwary intruder to activate them.



NEW SKILL

Trap Expert (Academic skill): This Hero is able to detect traps in the tombs with relative ease. A character who possesses this skill will never set off traps himself (but may be subject to their effects if he is too close to one if it goes off). He can attempt to disarm any traps he comes across. He must stop at the trap during his Movement phase, and may do nothing else that turn. To disarm a Simple trap, he must roll 6+ on 2D6. To disarm a Complex trap, he must roll 8+ on 2D6. If unsuccessful, he must test against his Initiative. A failed test means he has inadvertently set off the trap himself!

He is also able to restore dud traps or previously de-activated traps back into active traps. To determine what a Dud trap becomes, roll a D6: 1-4: Simple, 5-6: Complex. Obviously a previously disarmed trap will revert back to what it was. If restoring a Simple trap, he must roll a 6+ on 2D6. If restoring a Complex trap, he must roll an 8+. Failure will mean that the trap has failed to activate.

Scenario 10: Defend the Tomb

So that players can try out these new rules we've included this special scenario.

Your warband has entered a tomb and found the main burial chamber. After plundering it you hear the sounds of another warband entering the tomb. You must get it out without getting caught (the full list of scenarios can be found in issue 16 of TC).

TERRAIN

The dungeon is laid out with a large objective room at the centre. The objective room should have at least three entrances, more if possible. The defending warband is deployed first, inside or within 6" of the objective room. The attacker is deployed within 6" of any one or more entrances. The game ends if at the end of the defender's turn the attacker has more standing models inside the objective room than the defender. Alternatively, when one warband fails its Rout test the game ends.

WARBANDS

Roll to see who starts inside the tomb. Highest roll chooses. Whoever starts at the entrance of the tomb goes first and is the attacker. The defender deploys first inside the Burial chamber. The attacker(s) then deploy within the entrance room(s).

STARTING THE GAME

The attacker goes first. If there is more than one attacker then roll to see who goes first.

SPECIAL RULES

One figure is nominated to carry the treasure chest. He may only walk with it (no running or charging unless attacking someone within walking distance). The person with the chest may not use two-handed weapons. When the person carrying the chest is taken Out of Action another figure may pick up the chest by standing next to it for one turn without doing any thing.

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends when all but one warband fails a Rout test. Whoever gets the treasure out of the tomb wins.

EXPERIENCE

+1 Survives. If the Hero or Henchman group survive the battle they gain +1 experience

+1 Per Enemy Out of Action. Any Hero earns +1 experience for each person he puts Out of Action.

+1 Winning Leader. The leader of the winning warband gains +1 experience.

+1 Getting the Treasure. The warrior who carries the treasure out of the tomb gains +1 experience.

REWARDS

The winner gets D6x10 gc & D3 gems worth D6x5 gc and gets to roll for treasure on the following chart. Roll three times on the chart below to find out what else you get.

D6 Treasure Found

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Heavy Armour |
| 2 | D3 Scimitars (count as hand weapons) |
| 3 | D6 Jambyias (dagger) |
| 4 | Gem-encrusted Helmet worth D6x10 gc |
| 5 | Shield |
| 6 | Monkey's Paw (see equipment list) |

Equipment

The new equipment listed and explained here is exclusive to the Khemri – The Land of the Dead setting, although there is no reason why players that are travelling from Mordheim to Khemri and back in their campaign shouldn't continue using them on their return.

Lamp of the Djinn 50+2D6gc/Rare 12

These are exceptionally rare items that date back to the time of the Sultan Jaffar. It was said that the Sultan used magic and dark ritual to bind strange daemonic entities to mundane, everyday items so that he could call upon their powers but hide their true identity. Occasionally, one of these items finds its way into the hands of those foolhardy or reckless enough to try to use the powers of the dread Djinn.

Each time a hero uses the lamp it grants him three wishes but each time you roll on the 'Light table' you must roll on the 'Dark table' and apply the results.

D6 Light

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Gain D6 Experience points |
| 2 | Gain one skill from your skill list |
| 3 | Gain D6x10 gc |
| 4 | Gain a random item from the equipment list |
| 5 | Choose an item from the equipment list |

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- 6 Roll twice more on this chart

D6 Dark

- 1 Nothing happens
- 2 Nothing happens
- 3 Lose D6x10 gc
- 4 Lose D6 weapons
- 5 Lose the lamp
- 6 Roll once on the injury chart

Monkey's paw 50+1D6gc/Rare 10

Fashioned during the strange religious rites of the nomadic Tuareg people, this item is of similar potency to the Lamp of the Djinn. As with the fickle powers of the Djinn the, Monkey's paw is not always beneficial to its owner.



Each time a Hero uses the paw it grants three wishes but you only have to roll once on the dark side. If you roll this item you must take it. Every two games you have it and don't use it you have to roll on the dark side. You may not get rid of the paw unless you use it three times or roll lose the paw. After the third use it disappears.

D6 Light

- 1 Gain D6 Experience points
- 2 Gain one skill from your Skill list
- 3 Gain D6x10 gc
- 4 Gain an extra Hero even if it is above your maximum allowed
- 5 Gain an extra Henchman even if it is above your maximum allowed
- 6 Roll twice more on this chart

D6 Dark

- 1 Lose D6 Experience points
- 2 Lose one random skill
- 3 Lose D6x10 gc
- 4 Lose a Hero
- 5 Lose a Henchman
- 6 Lose the paw

Magic Carpet 50+4D6gc/Rare 12

These wondrous items from a forgotten age are even rarer than the lamps of the Djinn and are thought to have originated from the distant long dead Sorcerer's Isles.

A magic carpet is indeed just that – a carpet

that flies! It counts as a mount and allows movement of 16" with no restrictions for terrain. You can move onto the roofs of buildings and other high places with no penalty. The carpet may carry up to three men or one large creature and a man. One of the riders must be a character. Due to its magical nature it cannot be destroyed.



Katar

5gc/Rare 4

This is an Arabian-style punch dagger. It has a handle perpendicular to the blade and is used in a punching thrusting manner.

Range: Close Combat

Strength: as user

Special Rules: -1 enemy armour save

Tufenk

15gc/Rare 10

This is a blowpipe that projects alchemical fire about eight feet causing burning damage.

Range: 8'

Strength: 2

Special Rules: May fire every other turn, causes fire damage.

Fire – If you hit roll a D6, on a 4+ your opponent is set on fire. They must roll a D6 each Recovery phase, on a 4+ they extinguish the fire or they immediately suffer a S4 hit and may only move. Friendly models may help in extinguishing the model that is ablaze. They must be in base-to-base contact and need to roll a 4+ on a D6. Against dry targets like Mummies they are Strength 3 and on a 2+ on 1D6 the Mummy catches fire.

NEXT ISSUE...

Fynde there the fyrst warband for the Land of the Dead, the dreaded Tomb Guardians

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The Storyteller.

The old man sat on a piece of worn carpet near the edge of the bazaar. Like the other traders he was there every day but unlike them he had no wares to sell. Still a small crowd gathered, seated at his feet. Everyone knew where to find the storyteller at this time of day and they all came as the heat of the midday sun began to cool into evening. Young and old alike would sit in awe around him as he wove tales of dashing heroes or mighty princes, love and treachery. Sometimes these tales were of mighty deeds, sometimes of tragedies, but the ones they always asked to hear were the ones that frightened them the most.



“Long, long ago in the land we now call the Land of the Dead,” the storyteller started in a low whisper. He didn’t need to raise his voice, his audience was silent, hanging on his every word. He noticed some of the younger children move closer to their mothers. However many times he told this story he still felt a shiver of fear himself.

The story unfolded revealing mad kings who craved eternal life and evil priests who practiced forbidden arts. He told of vast necropolises built to house the dead at the expense of the living. Then as the sun began to set over the old town and with darkness beginning to creep over the market place, he told them of the coming of the Great Necromancer but would not name him. At the back of the crowd a child started to cry and was hurried away by her mother.



As the sky turned from orange to red and then black, he told them of the raising of the Tomb Kings and the mighty hordes of living dead who warred ceaselessly. His listeners, who were just as captive as those undead warriors, shuffled uncomfortably.

Finally he told them what frightened them most. The undead kings still waited in their tombs, biding their time before setting forth to war again. He spoke of the countless treasures buried with them. As he fell into silence, his tale exhausted like himself, a boy he judged about fourteen, nearly a man, asked, “But why doesn’t everyone just dig up the treasure?”

“Many do try,” replied the old man after a pause for thought. “But few return, and most of those that do are driven so mad that they dare not speak of what they have seen.”

“Others...” he paused again, with a faraway look in his eyes. “Others return bearing stories and legends of long ago...”